

Insurance Program, which was designed to help uninsured children across America.

Unfortunately, it has gotten into the arena now of not only providing coverage for children but also coverage for some adults. Frankly, I don't agree with that, but I don't have a problem with it in this supplemental. We will deal with that issue in the reauthorization of this program. We do have a provision in the supplemental that would cover the shortfall for the SCHIP program, which in Georgia we refer to as PeachCare. It would have provided the money to fund a shortfall in SCHIP between now and the end of the fiscal year for States such as mine that are going to experience this shortfall. Georgia happens to be the first of 14 States that is going to have this shortfall, and we have had to take measures—and our legislature, thank goodness, has done that—to make up this shortfall. In the interim, between now and the time this bill is going to come back to this body for reconsideration after being vetoed by the President, Georgia's taxpayers are going to have to fund a greater portion of the SCHIP program than they should have to. So I have filed a bill today that is going to take care of that. It is going to provide immediate funding for the shortfall in Georgia, as well as all of the other shortfall States in the country today that, while they may not experience a shortfall as we speak, it is coming within the next 30 to 60 to 90 days to 13 other States.

On behalf of Senator ISAKSON and myself, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1022, introduced earlier today; that the bill be read a third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, unfortunately, I must object to the Senator's request. We passed money for the shortfall in the supplemental and we should not extend the program at the expense of the current coverage.

I look forward to working with the Senator from Georgia on reauthorization that preserves the program and the coverage that is needed, and toward that end, I ask unanimous consent that my bill dealing with SCHIP, introduced earlier today, S. 1023, be considered, read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. First, the Chair notes the objection of the Senator from New Jersey.

Is there objection to the motion of the Senator from New Jersey?

Mr. DEMINT. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection of the Senator from South Carolina is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. RES. 123

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, earlier this year the Senate worked together to change the way we appropriate money in Congress. One of the big showdowns that we had earlier in the year with the new majority was the discussion of earmarks and how we would disclose them and be more transparent to the American people. We worked hard. I introduced an amendment that would provide disclosure at the committee level and asked that the committee put any earmarks on the Internet and tell who offered the earmark and what it would go for, to make sure there is no conflict of interest.

Originally, the majority tried to table that motion, but once we worked together on language and worked out every detail, that amendment was agreed to 98 to 0. It was unanimous that we should stop earmarking the way we are today and use common-sense disclosure rules for America to know how we are spending its money.

Unfortunately, that amendment is part of the lobbying reform, ethics reform bill that has gone to conference with the House that apparently is not going to act on it at all. My proposal has been that we take what we passed in the Senate. We are beginning the appropriations process again. Unless we impose these rules on ourselves, rules that we all agreed on, we are going to go through the same thing we did last year where we put all these bills together, with thousands of earmarks, and at the end of the year some of us are going to be forced to try to stop the whole process, which, hopefully, we will not do.

What I would like to do today to fix this problem is take the amendment we have passed unanimously before and bring it up and pass it in the Senate as a Senate rule so we would operate under the rules that we have all agreed to during this appropriations season. The resolution number is 123, so fixing the current appropriations problem and earmark problem is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration, and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 123; further, that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I believe there is an appropriate process to consider the Senator's request, but at this time I object.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I am certainly disappointed. This is something to which we have agreed. We worked out the language with the majority. Certainly, we should be operating under the rules that we have agreed to during this appropriations season.

It is very unfortunate. I am very disappointed. I guess I have no choice, if the majority is going to object.

I yield and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

#### EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the fiscal year 2007 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, just approved by the Senate, includes over \$96 billion for the troops. It includes increases above the President's request for the Department of Defense, including increases of \$1.3 billion for defense health, \$1 billion for equipping the National Guard and Reserve, and \$1.1 billion for military housing.

The bill includes \$6.7 billion for rebuilding the gulf coast region following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. It includes \$4.2 billion for agricultural disaster relief. It includes nearly \$1.8 billion for the VA to make sure that we meet our moral obligation to provide first-class health care to our wounded veterans.

Most importantly, with passage of this bill, the Senate sends a clear message to the President that we must take the war in Iraq in a new direction. Setting a goal for getting most of our troops out of Iraq is not cutting and running. The new direction provides incentives to the Iraqi people to settle their differences, to end their civil war, and to pursue reconciliation. One fact is plainly clear: The President wants to run his war his way, without anyone asking any questions or requiring any standards of progress.

That is the kind of attitude that has resulted in the chaos we see in Iraq each day. President Bush does not want anyone to hold him accountable for the failures in Iraq. He does not want anyone to hold him responsible for our troops remaining caught in the escalating Iraqi civil war. The President has his eyes closed to the truth in Iraq.

Let me read excerpts from a letter I recently received from soldiers serving in and around Baghdad:

We write you this letter. . . . Senator Byrd, because of your prominent role as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and because of your documented observation of the alarming lack of debate within the Senate over the Iraq War.

So much of the controversy surrounding the proposed surge strategy has hinged on "support for our troops." Yet, the voice of the individual trooper is not heard. As volunteer members of the military, we waive certain civil rights. We cannot quit. We have a legal and moral responsibility to carry out

the orders given. We offer our bodies and minds, but sacrifice our voices. Our voice is in our vote. Last November, we voted for a Congress that would halt the disastrous Iraq War. . . .

Some of us are on our first tour, some our second or third, and for one of us, fifth. We have done our duty, and will continue to do so until our obligation is complete. Upon completion of our obligation, we hope to close this unhappy chapter in our lives and move forward. . . .

Listening to the ongoing debate in the news, and the conflicting views of our lawmakers, we hear again and again accusations by one side of the other side's desire to undercut the troops. We see these accusations as moral blackmail. For it is overwhelmingly clear from all of our experiences that despite the unpopularity of this war, the American people have provided unfaltering moral support to the men and women of the military. We implore lawmakers to abandon these hollow accusations, and to focus on the national interest as a whole. We earnestly hope for the enactment of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, particularly those concerning the de-escalation of the war and direct diplomatic engagement of Syria and Iran. We encourage Congress to obstruct the escalation of this war by any means possible.

Continuing to read from the letter, these soldiers said:

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, we have become painfully aware of our own vulnerability. We have spent vast resources preparing for unknown disaster, fighting an enemy that is ubiquitous, but not clearly defined. We are fighting the specter of fear. This is an internal struggle that we must reconcile. Our vision of the future has grown clouded and ominous. We face a situation in Iraq that leaves us with little hope for a satisfying outcome. As a nation, we must recover from the trauma of 9/11 and abandon the misguided policies we have pursued in its wake. Using the military as our primary foreign policy tool has isolated us and fueled worldwide resentment of us, and has not increased our sense of security. Halting the Iraq war is America's opportunity to change direction, to reengage the world, and discourage terrorism and extremism by showing the world the ingenuity of our people and our commitment to freedom and democracy.

These are the written words of soldiers now serving in Iraq.

The American people want our troops out of Iraq. The Congress has said very clearly that we want our military to refocus on Osama bin Laden and his terrorist bases in Afghanistan. The President has said he will veto this bill. His administration has asserted that adding funds for caring for our wounded veterans, for rebuilding the gulf coast, for securing the homeland, and for agricultural disaster assistance is playing politics. What nonsense. With approval of this bill, Congress will have appropriated \$448 billion for the war in Iraq, including \$38 billion for rebuilding Iraq. Certainly if we can spend \$38 billion on rebuilding Baghdad, we can spend money on rebuilding the gulf coast, taking care of our veterans and protecting our agricultural economy.

I hope that the President will drop his rhetoric and instead work with Congress to craft a responsible plan to

transition our forces from Iraq and refocus on bin Laden and his base of operations.

Instead of demonizing the Congress and engaging in rhetorical finger-pointing, the President ought to work with Congress on legislation that is in the best interests of the country. I want to thank Senator COCHRAN, Senator MURRAY, Senator REID, and Senator MCCONNELL for their efforts this week in moving this bill through the Senate. I also want to thank the Appropriations Committee staff, including Terry Sauvain, Charles Kieffer, Peter Rogoff, B.G. Wright, Kate Fitzpatrick, Bruce Evans, Blake Thompson, and all of the Subcommittee staffs for their hard work on this bill.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. BROWNBACK pertaining to the introduction of S. 1036 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BROWNBACK. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COLEMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REINTEGRATION OF RETURNING TROOPS

Mr. COLEMAN. Madam President, I rise to speak about an issue that is very dear to me and my home State of Minnesota: the reintegration of our returning soldiers into their families and their communities.

I begin my remarks by citing a letter to the editor published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press last Saturday by Army National Guard Chaplain MAJ John Morris. The letter is titled, "It Takes Communities To Bring Soldiers All The Way Home." I ask unanimous consent to have the letter printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

IT TAKES COMMUNITIES TO BRING SOLDIERS ALL THE WAY HOME

(By John Morris)

[From the TwinCities.com-Pioneer Press, Mar. 17, 2007]

I am watching the growing furor over the shortcomings in the Veterans Administration system and the fallout from Walter Reed Army Hospital with growing alarm. I am concerned that we are going to fix the crisis and forget the problem.

The problem is how to help warriors, and their families, successfully reintegrate back into our communities, and their homes, after combat. A portion of that problem is health care related. For a majority of combat vets, however, only a small part of their reintegration challenge has to do with health care for physical injuries. Behavioral and mental health are bigger issues. And for most, the biggest challenge is relational: rebuilding marriages, reconnecting with children, rejoining friends, rejoining the global economy, getting back to the communities of faith we left, etc.

The problem with focusing on the VA is we may well fix the VA only to convince ourselves that the reintegration of our combat veterans is a government program, not a community process. If we expect the government to take care of everything, we will have failed our combat veterans and their families as well as ourselves.

We have sent our precious men and women to war. The VA can't bring them home. Only we can. We have a moral obligation to insure that all of our combat veterans come all the way home to their families, their jobs, their schools and their communities.

A government program can't do that. A community can.

That means each of us needs to roll up our sleeves and do more than castigate the VA. It means the following:

If you are a health care provider in Minnesota, do the right thing: Become a Tricare provider. Tricare is the insurance the government issues to mobilized reservists and guardsmen.

Two-thirds of Minnesota health care providers are not Tricare providers. The result: We do not have an in-patient chemical dependency treatment center in Minnesota that is a Tricare provider. We have a dire shortage of behavioral mental health providers who are Tricare providers. The VA can't fix this we can.

If you are an educator, sign up for an Operation Military Kids workshop and learn about the daunting challenges our 7,000 Minnesota military kids face when their parent marches off to war, and when they return. Help our children while we are at war. Parent educators, we need you to offer classes in every school district in Minnesota, for military families. We need your help in learning how to parent our children again.

If you are a member of the clergy, learn all you can about the toll combat takes on marriages, families, mothers and fathers of military personnel. You don't have to support the foreign policy to pray for us while we are in harm's way and to visit our parents, our spouses and our children while we are gone. When we come home, we need your help in putting our marriages, families and lives back together.

If you are an employer, please give my spouse some grace. She or he is juggling a job, a family, a home and a huge heartache. There are no laws to protect them while we are at war, as there are to protect my job when I come back. They struggle mightily and may need some special attention and some extra time off. Do the right thing—help them.

If you are a social service provider, learn all you can about combat operational stress,